

Edward VII and the Entente Cordiale
Parts 1-3

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Edward VII and the Entente Cordiale, I

By FRANCIS NEILSON

IS THERE ANY SOUND REASON why a monarch's conduct in political and social affairs should not conform to that of his ministers? This question is asked because so many biographers of Queen Victoria's eldest son would blame his father and mother for his strict rearing, his rigorous education, and his willfulness in committing Great Britain to an understanding with France; also, for his notorious frivolities and other expensive indulgences. It is not hard to imagine what political ruin would have befallen any of the Prime Ministers of his time—Peel, Gladstone, Disraeli or Rosebery—had one of them lapsed in circumspection even once, as the Prince did many times.

His training was strict, and his apologists do not fail to point some of the reasons for it. His predecessors were not models of kingly virtue or of manly decorum. George IV was a notorious roisterer, and the stories of his ribald career, as Prince and King, were still common gossip when Edward was born. Moreover, court life in his grandfather's day was so scandalous that the satirist and cartoonist found in it much to keep their pens and pencils busy.

Surely the young Princess Victoria, afterwards Queen, knew of many reports of improper conduct among the people of the court—enough, indeed, to make her think gravely about the future of her own children. The peculiar influence of Sir John Conroy as Comptroller of the household of the Queen's mother, the Duchess of Kent, was serious enough to alarm her. Bertram Newman, in his biography of *Lord Melbourne* deals all too briefly with this affair and says, "The Princess [Victoria] had become estranged from her mother, and she had come to detest Conroy, and his influence over her." After the coronation, Conroy was banished from the Queen's presence, and Newman says, "Melbourne must have cursed the circumstances which made it impossible for him to kick Conroy straight out of Buckingham Palace and forbid him to set foot there again."¹

If we are to understand why the young Prince Edward's training as a child and youth was sternly imposed, it is necessary to know some of the history of the life at court of his mother's predecessors and their ministers. The sycophants who wrote the plausible biographies after Victoria came to the throne little knew that, in the years to come, more realistic, more courageous writers would open the door that hid the skeletons in the closets, and expose the scandals of the royal line, which filled their minds with anxiety.

¹ London, Macmillan, 1930, pp. 222, 229.

The Creevey Papers

IN THE ATTEMPT to revive an interest in books of memoirs, private diaries and letters of well-known personages of the time of the Georges, many editors of such works, I find, deplore their neglect by the historians. Since the days of Macaulay, the historians have failed to exploit their descriptions of the state of affairs at court and in Parliament. Fifty years ago John Murray published *The Creevey Papers*, a most realistic series of pictures at first hand, drawn with a sure touch by one at the center of affairs. The work was edited by no less a personage than Sir Henry Herbert Maxwell, a Member of Parliament. It is the pithiest account of the great luminaries of the time that was ever put together. I know of no work of the period which contains so much enlightenment about the doings of royalty and ministers as is to be found in these pages.

How this work has been overlooked I cannot understand, for shocking as the revelations are, it is, in many respects, the most amusing book of its kind I ever read. Creevey's people stand out in the full light of day. There is no thumbnail sketching in his volume. He brings to our notice Pitt, Addington, Canning, Brougham, and all the top-rank politicians of the period. As for his gallery of the great hostesses of the era, there is nothing that compares with his irresistible humor in making us see them as they appeared to him.

No work reveals the character of the men of that period so clearly as these letters of Thomas Creevey. In the introduction the editor tells us:

... It must ever be a source of wonder to the student of history how the Tory Government weathered the stress and storm of those years. For twenty years a mighty war, taxing to the utmost the physical resources of a population not exceeding fifteen millions, was sustained at the cost of a crushing increment of debt. The fall in prices suddenly ensuing upon the peace of 1815, plunged the whole agricultural community into dire distress, and was accompanied by an almost total cessation of continental demand for British manufactures, arising from the utter loss of buying power in foreign markets, which involved the artisan population in the terrible distress. Nor was this all, though well it might be reckoned enough to bring about the fall of any administration. Ministers groaned under the affliction of a mad King and a deplorable Regent. The whole heart of the nation was stirred against the Administration by reason of the part assigned to Ministers in the proceedings against Queen Caroline. . . .²

What a field this is for a young historian, for *The Creevey Papers* are virgin ground.

Creevey was in Brussels and spoke to the Duke of Wellington just before the Battle of Waterloo. The pages he has devoted to it give us a

² London, 1904, 2 vols., vol. I, pp. ix-x.

far more detailed account of what took place in the last battle of Napoleon than any of the histories which deal with that momentous struggle.

Secret History of George III

YET, I UNDERSTAND the difficulties that have beset so many of King Edward's biographers in their attempts to present a realistic picture of the circumstances which forced Prince Albert and the boy's mother to impose upon the child a severe discipline. For the volumes, pamphlets, and verse published in the early years of the nineteenth century read more like the gossip of muckrakers than accurate historical reporting. Years ago I made a study of the books then available in public libraries, which were devoted to the reign of Queen Victoria and her children. In not one did I find a single reference to the work I consider indispensable for a proper knowledge of the facts that influenced Prince Albert and Baron Stockmar in imposing upon the young Edward a discipline that would, so they thought, make it well-nigh impossible for him to veer from the straight and narrow path.

The *Secret History of the Court of England* was written by Lady Anne Hamilton, and published in 1832, five years before Victoria was crowned. It is one of the most remarkable exposés of profligate characters in the royal household and in Parliament that was ever penned. No wonder collectors have found it difficult to obtain a copy. It deals principally with the life and death of Princess Charlotte (wife of George III) and the circumstances of the brutal trial of Queen Caroline (wife of George IV). The revelations are sufficient to put a taboo upon the book and stop its circulation.

But even more startling than these shocking affairs is the story of George III's marriage to Hannah Lightfoot. The ceremony took place at Curzon Street Chapel, Mayfair, in the year 1759. Children were born to this union. It was because of this "illegal" marriage that the Royal Marriage Act was passed by Parliament, but not until after thirteen years had elapsed. Then George III was practically forced by the government to repudiate the marriage and marry Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. The King never recovered from the blow of having to part with Hannah, and for years after he married Charlotte, tried to find her.

One of my intimate acquaintances over a long period was Henry Waller, the last of the line descended from George III and Hannah Lightfoot, the beautiful Quakeress. As a child Waller was found living with poor parents in Glasgow, but he had already shown surprising ability as a musician. Mary Scott Siddons, the actress, heard about him and sought

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him out. She paid several visits to his home, and one day his father brought a traveling bag to Mary, asking her if she could make out the initials, the arms and crest stamped upon the articles. It only took a glance or two for her to realize that it was the bag of His Majesty George III. Afterwards she adopted Henry and sent him to Weimar to study under Lizst.

After Waller left Weimar, he became one of the first boy prodigies on the piano. Mrs. Siddons, who sometimes read to Queen Victoria, asked Her Majesty if she would like to hear the boy play. This was granted, and the Queen made quite a fuss of him.

The story of Hannah Lightfoot and her royal spouse has been ignored by the nineteenth century historians. Samuel R. Gardiner does not mention it in his article on "George III" in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*.³ But Lady Anne Hamilton gives the full story of both marriages. Of Princess Charlotte, who became the wife of George III after Hannah was illegally divorced from him, Lady Anne says:

During the king's indisposition, he was most passionate in his requests, that the *wife of his choice* should be brought to him. The queen, judging her influence might be of much consequence to quell the perturbation of her husband's mind, was, agreeably to her own request, admitted to the solitary apartment of the king. It is true he recognised her, but it was followed by extreme expressions of disappointment and disgust! The queen was well acquainted with all subjects connected with his majesty's unfortunate passion and marriage. . . .⁴

But to return to the traveling bag. Waller's father told Mary that it had been treasured by his grandfather, for it belonged to a Mr. Wettin. Mary did not know how the name Waller came to be substituted for the royal one, but she was convinced that Queen Victoria, when she met the boy-pianist, seemed to understand something about his lineage.

The plots in this book on the secret history would supply an author with at least a dozen sensational novels. It is the only work I have come across that gives a reasonable story as to the authorship of the letters of Junius. Indeed, many of the controversial subjects that have perplexed literary men for a century and a half are discussed in this work. It is a shocking revelation of life at court and the cupidity and mendacity of the statesmen of that day.

That great historian, Lord Acton, in his review of Tocqueville's *Souvenirs*, said:

³ 11th ed., vol. XI, pp. 740-3.

⁴ Lady Anne Hamilton, *The Secret History of the Court of England*, London, William Henry Stevenson, 1832, 2 vols., vol. I, p. 38.

We cannot form a judgment until we know the worst of the cause to be tried. From the time when the biographical element becomes distinct, for the last five hundred years, there is this constant result, that fewer characters bear the searchlight; and it may generally be affirmed of ruling and leading spirits that, the better we know them, the worse they appear.⁵

Lady Hamilton was the sister of the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, and she lived at court. She was a personal friend of Queen Caroline, wife of George IV, and was with her to the end of her days. The book as a whole is one of the most extraordinary specimens of recording facts ever written by a woman. It contains astonishing information; it is documented with precision and written without a paragraph of padding.

Court Life at a Low Ebb

LADY HAMILTON makes this statement at the outset:

The secret history of the Court of England, during the last two reigns, will afford the reflecting mind abundant matter for regret and abhorrence. It has, however, been so much the fashion for historians to speak of kings and their ministers in all the fulsome terms of flattery, that the inquirer frequently finds it a matter of great difficulty to arrive at truth. But, fearless of consequences, we will speak of facts as they *really occurred*. . . .⁶

No one can read her work and be in doubt about the facts she presents. It was the fashion, even as late as Disraeli's day, for popular writers to ignore the secret history of the reigns of George III and George IV. Even Thackeray, in his sketch of George III merely mentions Hannah Lightfoot in a short sentence. As for the last days of Queen Caroline, I do not remember reading in any work the details of her death as they are recorded by Lady Hamilton. Her description of the trial of the Queen and the bribed peerage that attended it reads like a story torn from the pages of the Tudors.

To give an idea of how some of the most prominent statesmen of that day looked upon it, she gives a long quotation from the speech of Lord Brougham, when he was invested with the title of Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow in 1825. Here are some of his remarks:

Was that a trial where the accused had to plead before those who were interested in her destruction?—where those who sat on the bench of justice, aye, and pretended to be her judges, had pre-ordained her fate? . . . Trial it was none, where every form of justice was obliged to be broken through on the very surface before the accusers could get at the imputed grounds of their accusations. This, forsooth, a trial!—call it not so, for the sake of truth and law.⁷

⁵ *Nineteenth Century*, London, 33 (May, 1893), pp. 883–6.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 25 (italics in original).

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 139–40.

Then, in connection with the opinion of Europeans, and the mass of his fellow citizens, Lady Anne says Brougham asked:

How many long years had they not seen, when to be an Englishman on the Continent was a painful, if not a degrading, condition? He meant, during that dark and murky night of power, when the machinations of the family of the tyrants of Europe were at work, and when they could reckon upon the minister of England as silently suffering, nay, permitting their deadly march against the liberties of mankind. England, then, had her fair name degraded by being considered as the ABETTOR of every tyrant's plan for the subjugation of his subjects.⁸

The quotation given by Lady Hamilton must be read in its entirety if one is to appreciate the depth of feeling that was expressed by the great mass of the English people at the treatment of the Queen.

Creevey, in a series of letters from Brougham, tells the story of the proceedings brought against Queen Caroline. Creevey calls it "a squalid tragedy," and in a letter that Brougham wrote to him, we learn of her treatment when she presented herself at the House of Lords for the trial. She was accompanied by Lady Anne Hamilton and Lady Hood sitting opposite. Finding no entrance, she decided to go home:

About ½ past six [a.m.] she had finished her walks and calls at the doors, and got into the carriage to return. She came by Whitehall, Pall Mall and Piccadilly. The crowd in the Broad Street of Whitehall was immense (the barriers being across Parlt. St. and King St.). All, or nearly all followed her and risked losing their places. They crammed Cockspur Street and Pall Mall, &c., hooting and cursing the King and his friends, and huzzaing her. A vast multitude followed her home, and then broke windows. . . .⁹

The editor tells us that Brougham thought of rousing the North in the interest of the Queen:

. . . His plans, here characteristically sketched in a letter to Creevey, were never carried into effect, death intervening mercifully to remove Queen Caroline from the troubled scene—the scene which her continued presence could only have rendered still more troubled. The appalling severity of the remedies administered can scarcely have failed to accelerate her release.¹⁰

Alas, much of history, as we know it, deserves the rebuke of Schopenhauer and his sad reflections on the integrity of Clio. The abused Muse has worn mourning weeds many times during our era, but never had she reason so profound for tears as she had during the reigns of the Georges.

Think of George Canning, Henry Brougham, and other such political

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 141.

⁹ *Creevey Papers, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 18.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

luminaries, as they have been presented to us by servile recorders, and then turn to the pages of Thomas Creevey, Lady Anne Hamilton, John Hobhouse, the *Letters of Junius*,¹¹ and other courageous critics of that day. The pamphlet of Hobhouse, referred to by Lady Anne Hamilton, is a commentary on Parliament and ministers that no student can afford to overlook. It was published anonymously, but was speedily withdrawn from publication. Still, a few copies were sold and Lady Anne was fortunate enough to buy one. Hobhouse says:

To what a state of degradation are we sunk, when a defendant is to be cheered into being a plaintiff; to be applauded when he assaults the sufferings of the oppressed, and arraigns the motives of men of honour and unsullied reputation! You are yourself aware, sir, that in no other assembly in England would you have been allowed to proceed, for an instant, in so gross a violation of all decencies of life as was hazarded by that speech, which found a patient and a pleased audience in the House of Commons. . . .¹²

This was addressed to George Canning. So scathing, so stinging were the animadversions of Hobhouse that Canning issued a challenge not only to the author of the pamphlet but to Hume and to Sir Francis Burdett. The rankling arrow that went home and struck the hardy conscience of Canning was as follows:

. . . How was it that you were selected for the odious and TREACHEROUS task of justifying the rigorous measures of the imbecile, but unfeeling, SIDMOUTH, directed as they were against the aged, the infirm, the powerless of his country? . . .¹³

Edward VII's Strict Upbringing

WHAT A PITY it is that this period is not better understood by our young historians. There are volumes to be written that will make clear to the generations to come the precise reasons for the strict discipline imposed on the young Prince by Prince Albert and Baron Stockmar. No one knew better than Stockmar himself that schooling is that which an instructor gives a pupil, but education is that which a youth gives himself, from the means of knowledge at his disposal. Still, in this case, the best-laid schemes did not serve the purpose Stockmar had in view. This man has been held up by some of the biographers as "a learned ogre," but a perusal of Newman's book on Melbourne will give the reader a completely different view of an estimable person who engineered the marriage of Victoria to Prince Albert. It was Stockmar who undertook the most diffi-

¹¹ Woodfall's ed., London, Routledge, n.d. [1874?].

¹² *Secret History*, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 180.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

cult of tasks, that of cleansing the Augean stables of the court, and establishing an atmosphere of health and virtue in which his pupil, the Prince Consort, was enabled to work wonders for the English people.

These books should be known and their contents understood if historians are to appreciate the reasons why Victoria's eldest son was submitted to what the biographers consider "a loveless rearing and a cruel preliminary education."

With the exception of Sir Sidney Lee,¹⁴ the biographers since his day have been inclined to pardon Prince Edward's headstrong impulse to interfere with the politics of British governments, and also to condone his frivolous escapades with the ladies. They do not seem to realize that they are regarding this matter from the viewpoint of latter-day educationists. It should not be necessary to point out that there are many records of a similar character not only in the private schools but in the letters and diaries of the families of that period. As for criticizing the mother for not coddling the child, it should be remembered that her children came at quick intervals, and her duties as a Sovereign occupied many hours of her day. This is not to say that the young Prince was neglected by her nor by his father. The training may have been excessive and perhaps he resented the discipline, but we have no reliable record of the characteristics of the child.

Dr. W. H. Edwards presents the case as follows:

. . . A strong feeling of abhorrence at the idea of what evils the child might suffer through ancestral influences was the cause of the Queen's ready acceptance of every inhuman rule which Prince Albert and Baron Stockmar enforced in his upbringing. And the Queen's yielding on these points can easily be understood. She was eleven years old when George IV died, and she was but eighteen when William IV left her the throne. There were still men about her who remembered the peril in which the realm had stood as a result of the weakness of character and unworthiness of the last three bearers of the English crown.¹⁵

This is putting it mildly, if the words "inhuman rule" were excised. The strong expression of Dr. Edwards is misleading, for there was nothing of that in the composition of his mother or father. As for Baron Stockmar, he was not a man to harbor such a thought, and there are records showing that his one desire in schooling the boy was to make him worthy of the throne of England.

¹⁴ He wrote the tabloid biography of King Edward in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1912, and the two-volumed study, *King Edward VII*, London, 1925 and 1927 (the second volume was completed after his death by F. S. Markham).

¹⁵ *The Tragedy of Edward VII, A Psychological Study*, trans. from the German, London, Gollancz, 1928, pp. 14-5.

Dr. Edwards deals chiefly with the political activities of the Prince and King, and the bitter animosities that raged in the courts of Europe from the time of the Franco-German War down to the time of the making of the Entente with France. Those who are interested in the unsavory escapades and other extravagant indulgences of the King may turn to Virginia Cowles' work, *Edward VII and His Circle*.¹⁶

However, there is much more to be said now about Edward VII than was known when Sir Sidney Lee wrote his life. And one will search in vain the two books mentioned above for the newer information we now have of the secret treaties the King knew nothing about, which entangled Great Britain in a web that brought her to the present pass.

There has just been published a work from the pen of one who possessed an intimate knowledge of the royalties of England and Germany. It is called *My Memories of Six Reigns*, by Her Highness Princess Marie Louise, a favorite granddaughter of Queen Victoria. It is one of the most fascinating volumes on royal personages that I have read. The book is full of the most amusing anecdotes, and we learn from them many intimate characteristics that escape the attention of the biographers who served in the royal household.

She gives quite a different view of the relationship between the old Queen and her son, the Prince of Wales. She says:

Her Majesty fully recognised the dangers of heredity, and on one occasion, when the education and strict upbringing of Edward VII was being criticised, she remarked, "Remember, there is only my life between his (Edward VII) and the lives of my Wicked Uncles." This remark of hers gives the clue to much that has been misunderstood as well as misrepresented regarding the relationship of the Queen and her heir. In many of the appreciations and biographies of Edward VII, I have often wondered why the writers have to some extent praised the King at the expense of Queen Victoria. Both were such outstanding characters: different, it is true, in many ways, but each one of these great Sovereigns has left a very distinctive mark not only on English history and politics but on European history as well.¹⁷

Dr. Edwards gives us a very gloomy view of the life the young Prince led at Oxford and Cambridge. No doubt the restrictions were of such a nature that he rebelled against them. His father and Baron Stockmar did not realize that the contrast between the life that the young Prince was obliged to live and the relative freedom of his fellow students seemed a great hardship to him.

¹⁶ London, Hamish Hamilton, 1956; American edition entitled *Gay Monarch*, New York, Harper, 1956.

¹⁷ *Loc. cit.*, London, Evans, 1956, p. 143.

But the old fears would not down, and even when Prince Albert died, young Edward felt that the restraints of his training were shackles from which he could not break loose. Still, with all the discipline and caution, he was by no means the white-haired boy that Stockmar hoped he would be. No one has ever accused him of having a studious nature. In this respect he had all the defects of his progenitors from the female line. With all the care given to his schooling and his opportunities to educate himself, he remained through life a *bon vivant*.

His Role in Foreign Affairs

SOME OF HIS EARLIEST INTRUSIONS into the web of foreign affairs are mentioned in *Bismarck's Relations With England 1871-1890*,¹⁸ a work which astonished J. W. Headlam-Morley, Historical Adviser of the Foreign Office, who had been no particular friend of Germany. It threw a new light on the conduct of foreign affairs on the Continent during the years 1871 to 1890.

Headlam-Morley, who was closely associated with Lord Carnock (Sir Arthur Nicolson) and Eyre Crowe at the Foreign Office, has written the Historical Introduction to the *Documents*. He says:

... We have no reason to shrink from the publication of the real truth and this is the only method of counteracting the unauthentic rumours, the partial and interested "disclosures and revelations" which in the absence of fuller knowledge, too often pass as history.¹⁹

These *Documents* reveal clearly the worthlessness of many volumes written about the causes of the First World War, and show the part played by the sensational press of all countries, which filled the minds of statesmen with false reports and stirred the fires of hate among the masses.

Headlam-Morley learned from these *Documents* that neither he nor his chiefs at the British Foreign Office knew what Britain had missed in rejecting Bismarck's plan of an understanding with England as a sure preventive of war in Europe. Headlam-Morley writes:

... There is no sign here that he [Bismarck] underestimated the importance which a good understanding with England might have for his country; what we do find is the constant expression of annoyance, disappointment and chagrin that he could not persuade the leaders of British policy to take that active and responsible part in the counsels of the European states which he desired.²⁰

¹⁸ Selected and trans. by E. T. S. Dugdale from *German Diplomatic Documents 1871-1914*, 4 vols., New York and London, 1928.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

In these *Documents* we find a few references to the Prince of Wales' activities in Paris. Count Münster spent some time with Lord Beaconsfield at Hughenden, his country seat, and we learn in a dispatch to Bismarck, dated September 27, 1879, the British Prime Minister said, "The most natural allies for England were Germany and Austria. He would enter with joy into an alliance with Germany." But when Münster asked him about the Prince of Wales' great French sympathies, Beaconsfield replied, "You are right. The Prince has a certain amount of sympathy with the French, but even more for the French ladies."

Princess Marie Louise tells a story about the Prince's flirtations when he was in Paris. Four years ago she met the Marquise d'Harcourt, who was then 101 years old. She was in possession of all her faculties and remembered the Prince of Wales as a young man in Paris, where she had been a leader of French society. The Princess gives the story as follows:

My uncle, who always had a discriminating eye for a pretty face, started what might be called a very definite flirtation with one of the young and charming guests. At the end of the evening he murmured that he would like to continue this acquaintance, and could he possibly come up and see her when all the other guests had left.

She was slightly surprised and, I presume, very flattered, and agreed. She told H.R.H. that she would place a rose outside her door, in order that he should be able to identify it. The guests left, and H.R.H. found his way upstairs, saw the rose, and discreetly knocked on the door. A thin voice said, "*Entrez,*" which he did. But instead of his fair lady, it was the kitchenmaid who sat up in bed! Curtain!

I must add that when I told Queen Mary this story she was vastly amused.²¹

It makes all the difference in the world to read a bit of history of the doings of royalty, written by one who has been intimate with the personage and the events. Princess Marie Louise's book is full of first-hand information.

A photograph taken of her uncle when he was Prince shows he was an upstanding man of good looks, just the type of Englishman who would win the smiles of a Parisienne. But it must be remembered that he had not yet come into collision with his *bête noir*, the Kaiser William II. Later on in life he found pleasure in the company of Hedworth Williamson, Christopher Sykes, and other gentlemen who pandered to his whims. Indeed, one was called "the King's jester" by some of his companions.

It is in this period we must look for the effects of his education and, in reviewing it, we are obligated to admit that every effort to mold a King of rectitude was scattered to the winds, once he released himself

²¹ *My Memories., op. cit., pp. 162-3.*

from the fetters of discipline. The biographers excuse all this on the grounds that it was revulsion against the restraints of his youth. To go from one extreme to another may be counted as one of the frailties of mankind, to be sure, but it cannot be condoned in the case of one who was destined for the English throne.

The condition of affairs on the Continent after the scare of 1875 was so grave that war was feared. De Blowitz was then *The Times* correspondent in Paris, and he seemed to do all he could to keep the disturbances at fever heat. In the *Documents* we learn that the diatribes of the Paris correspondent of *The Times* were regarded in Germany as an expression of British public opinion and thus produced general exasperation and bitterly worded retorts. This particular war scare has often been used by English pseudo-historians as a reason for what later became a deep-seated grudge against the military prowess of Germany and France's fear of another invasion. Churchill, in his books on the wars, has pointed this out as an excuse for French animosity. But as with so many of his other ill-digested nostrums, he did not take the trouble to inform himself. For these *Documents* I am quoting from were published shortly after the First World War, and they contain the story of how this shocking piece of nefarious journalism arose. Here is the passage, as it is given in a Memorandum on page 7:

The Italian Minister then said confidentially, that the whole trouble was a cry of alarm from Paris. Everyone there knew who had written *The Times* article. For this very reason every Frenchman one met in the street exclaimed: "It is not M. Decazes who inspired the article."

German Note

The article referred to was one published against Germany on May 6th and entitled "A French Scare". According to it, the military party in Germany regarded the reorganisation of the French Army, not so much as an immediate menace, but as the forerunner of a terrible military power, which might ally itself with other States, and the Germans considered the moment favourable to secure for themselves a long period of peace and prosperity by means of a preventive war. The diplomatic representatives of Germany differed in their views as to the inspirer of this article.

On May 22nd, 1875, the Ambassador, Prince Hohenlohe, reported that its writer was de Blowitz, the well-known *Times* Paris correspondent, himself. Count Münster, Ambassador in London, on the authority of the owner of *The Times*, reported on June 28th that it had come to de Blowitz from a French source, and was probably dictated by the Duc Decazes himself, or at any rate inspired by him. De Blowitz's own *Memoirs* (p. 107) state that the article was written under the direct inspiration of the Duc Decazes. The Duc's attempt to shift the responsibility for it on to the shoulders of the German Ambassador (see G. Hanotaux's *Hist. de la*

France contemporaine, German translation, II, 2, 1907, p. 297) is accordingly unworthy of attention and is supported neither by the German documents nor by Hohenlohe's *Denkwürdigkeiten*.

The common reputation of the gutter press, after the turn of the century, was bad enough in all conscience, but it should be said that journalists connected with it realized that its *foreign news* affected few of its readers who, in the main, were far more interested in the reports of horse racing and other sports. But for journals of high repute to find space for the articles of de Blowitz and other foreign correspondents of like caliber, there was no excuse after the revelations of 1875 appeared, concerning the work of Duc Decazes.

For the education of a young English prince, Paris in that period was the last capital in Europe to be chosen for a sojourn. Even as late as October, 1884, Sir Charles Dilke was painfully sorry to learn from Count Herbert Bismarck "that the whole of the English Press, Conservative and Liberal, and above all *The Times*, inspired as it was throughout by Blowitz, was making every effort to irritate France against Germany."²²

The vane of politics swings as the wind blows. One never knows whether it points for long to fair weather or storm. The memoirs of diplomatists are replete with instances of sudden changes of mind and startling crises that spring up in the night. But Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, in his *Life of Lord Granville*,²³ and John Morley, in his *Life of William Ewart Gladstone*,²⁴ give us instances of these oscillations of statesmen. *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli*,²⁵ by W. F. Monypenny and G. E. Buckle, lights up many of these dark disturbances, and in *Coningsby or the New Generation*, by Benjamin Disraeli,²⁶ we learn from Victoria's favorite Prime Minister about those behind the scenes who are accountable for many strange variants of policy of the powers.

What occurred while the Prince of Wales was in Paris, in the Eighties, to cool his ardor for French association is not given to us in the *Documents*. But when the Crown Prince Frederick was in England in September, 1882, he wrote to Prince Bismarck saying:

My brother-in-law the Prince of Wales, shares the now general opinion that all political circles, without distinction of Party, desire closer and more confidential relations with Germany.

The conviction has been steadily growing that a close bond with Ger-

²² *German Diplomatic Documents*, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

²³ London, New York and Bombay, Longmans Green, 1905, 2 vols.

²⁴ London and New York, Macmillan, 1903, 3 vols.

²⁵ New York, Macmillan, new ed., 1929, 2 vols.

²⁶ New York, Century, 1903.

many, not only is in the interests of England, but is more calculated than any other combination, to ensure European peace.

From information received by me I have the impression that in England an alliance with Germany and Austria would be welcomed with the object of giving it very far-reaching extension for co-operation against *every* danger that may threaten peace.²⁷

It has been said many times since the end of the First World War that what the chief powers needed, more than a vindictive treaty of peace, was a courageous historian of ironclad will, subservient to no one. Here in this country it has been pointed out that we must not expect history to be written honestly about the two World Wars so long as our writers, in academic circles, are influenced to some extent by the type of trustee who is far too busy to seek knowledge other than that which the broadcaster gives him in the weary hours after strenuous business activity. But, happily, there now seems to be afoot a real demand for a cold-blooded historian. Professor Barraclough in England, who has taken Arnold Toynbee's place at the Institute for International Affairs, is conscious of the necessity of making a drastic change. And Arnold Toynbee himself, in a recent lecture given at the University of Minnesota, calls for one who will grasp the great opportunity and appreciate the responsibility of fulfilling the need.

Edward VII, an Untrustworthy Diplomatist

DR. EDWARDS, in a chapter of his book, called "Sa Ville Lumière," gives up his ideas of the Prince's diplomatic baptism in Paris. But in it one searches in vain for the facts, then known, concerning his impulsive intrusions into affairs, which became amorphous nightmares to the statesmen of England. How on earth could he be expected to understand the day-by-day difficulties which engrossed the minds of the cabinet in London and of Britain's diplomatists in the capitals of Europe? A research student has only to read the *Documents* to realize how impossible it was even for Disraeli and Gladstone to know the trend of events.

According to Dr. Edwards, "The many the Prince liked were in the first place his Paris friends of the high French aristocracy and the Imperial Guard." Yet, he knew that his interference was an intrusion, for he mentioned it in a letter that he wrote to Lord Salisbury. The matters of exceeding delicacy to the long-experienced diplomatists, Edwards would have us believe, were concerns that could be discussed at a tête-à-tête with a French statesman. One may readily imagine how easy it was for the Prince of Wales to meet the leaders of the French Government, for was

²⁷ *German Diplomatic Documents, op. cit., p. 159.*

he not heir to the throne of England, and did he not have hosts of friends in Paris? The ordinary courtesies extended to a visitor of royal blood were performed cheerfully, but it is quite another thing to follow Dr. Edwards in imagining for a moment that he had authority from his government to assume the duties of the British Ambassador to France.

But what was it worth? What good did it do? Edwards, in referring to Gladstone's Egyptian policy and the French opposition, completely weakens his defense of the Prince of Wales and his interference in the affairs of state. In a remarkable paragraph, which reveals the strong bias of Dr. Edwards' mind, he says:

. . . The discontent of French public opinion with England was not in the first place directed against the responsible British Minister, but against the voluntary Ambassador Extraordinary, who was much better known on the Paris boulevards, in clubs, theatres, and on the Turf, than the crabbed figure of a Lancashire manufacturer's son. For the first time in his political career Prince Edward experienced the fickle nature of Parisian popularity when, in 1883, the British Ambassador, Lord Lyons, advised him to avoid Paris on his continental travels. The Ambassador considered it his duty thus to protect the Prince from unseemly demonstrations on the part of a Paris mob. The Prince, however, did not keep away from Paris for long. In May 1884, he had undertaken, without instructions or plenipotentiary powers, the task of bringing about a reconciliation between England and France. He visited President Grévy and discussed all outstanding Anglo-French difficulties with him. After this visit, which proved politically sterile, the Prince returned to England in a pessimistic frame of mind.²⁸

The life led by the Prince of Wales during the Eighties was certainly not one that would inspire confidence in the Queen's ministers of either party as to his qualifications as a diplomatist. Virginia Cowles, in *Edward VII and His Circle*, gives us vivid descriptions of the Marlborough House set and the type of people with whom he became intimate. There were rumors that he was heavily burdened with debt, and that his expensive way of living might lead to complications with financiers that would shock the Queen. It is not easy to reconcile such a life as he led, and in such company, with the methods then practiced at the Foreign Office. The Prince complained of being kept in the dark about affairs of state, and Sir Julian Pauncefote, one of the permanent secretaries at Downing Street, found himself in the invidious position of not knowing whether to humor the Prince and offend his mother or vice versa. However, in 1887, Sir Henry Ponsonby, according to Arthur's life of his father, thought of a compromise and advised Pauncefote to let the Prince know what was go-

²⁸ *The Tragedy of Edward VII . . .*, op. cit., pp. 102-3.

ing on; but "as the direction of affairs is not in his hands, it does not appear to be necessary to submit confidential drafts for his consideration before they take effect."

There were ladies in society at that time, interested in the Prince, who loved to worm a secret out of him, and no one knew this better than Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's Private Secretary. There were rumors that the Prince was indiscreet and had given information that some foreign ministers would not think of imparting to their wives. Indeed, the stage had been reached in foreign relations when secret maneuvers in foreign offices and in the chancelleries became the order of the day. One has only to read Dr. Busch's books on Bismarck to become well aware of this fact.

Moreover, in the high society that gathered round the Prince, there were men and women directly and indirectly associated with the leaders of both parties. He would be a tyro at this game who would believe that the Liberals did not desire to know what the Tories were doing. Who else had deserved the reputation for slyness more than Benjamin Disraeli? One expression concerning this was bandied about by Lord Randolph Churchill's working men—"Dizzy knows how to pull the wool over the Grand Old Man's eyes [Gladstone]."

The problem was: Could the Prince be trusted with information that only the inner circle of secretaries at the Foreign Office kept *in camera*? The men at Downing Street had to protect themselves, for if a leak occurred, the blame for it might be put upon them.

It may be difficult for those who have not had parliamentary experience to understand the situation, but the research student will get a clear idea by reading the lives of Gladstone and Disraeli, and then turning to Dr. Moritz Busch's works on Bismarck: *Bismarck, Some Secret Pages of His History*²⁹ and *Our Chancellor; Sketches for a Historical Picture*.³⁰ He will realize, I think to the full, the responsibility that rests upon the political leader of a State. In all this, the Prince of Wales remained a neophyte until the time of the Second Boer War.

Port Washington, New York

(Continued)

²⁹ New York and London, Macmillan, 1898, 2 vols.

³⁰ Trans. by William Beatty-Kingston, London, Macmillan, 1884, 2 vols.

In the inductive study of actual conditions, there will always arise the difficulty that a mere description of facts does not afford an explanation or interpretation of them.

JOHN MAURICE CLARK

Edward VII and the Entente Cordiale, II

By FRANCIS NEILSON

FOR THE STUDENT who wishes to set to work upon a treatise to clear up the misunderstandings concerning the rivalries of the European powers, which ultimately terminated in the making of the Entente Cordiale, there is a wide background of political intrigue to be covered. He should go back at least one hundred years from the time of Edward VII's visit to President Loubet in Paris. The popular stories about the reigns from that of Queen Anne to the period when Victoria ascended the throne will scarcely serve to elucidate the reasons for the many frictions that drove the governments to war.

Swift's Political Satires

THERE IS AN INNER RECORD to all this, which only too often our historians disregard. Many of them have touched upon events with an all-too-light appreciation of their significance. For example, we learn little from them of the revelations of the conduct of government set down in the volumes of Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin. One reason for it is that there has been a weakening of the tough fiber of Englishmen during the past two generations. Some thoughtful authors have referred to it and lamented the lack of the robust political intelligence and acute economic sense often revealed by the masses in the days of the Georges. Of course, in the reign of Queen Anne, high and low found wit and wisdom in the books, tracts, and verse of Swift. Even Sarah Jennings, the wife of Marlborough, read *A Tale of a Tub* with eager interest, although much of it was directed against the questionable glory her husband won at Blenheim and Malplaquet.

In studying the history of Britain's domestic and foreign affairs the period of Queen Anne and the Hanoverian monarchs, one wonders at the intellectual audacity of many writers who perpetuate the defects of commission and omission which were rampant and severely criticized by the satirists of Swift's day. Have we become too nice, too thin-skinned to recognize that the sins of legislators are responsible for the havoc that is widespread now? It is very hard to imagine the people of this day realizing what the contrast signifies to a thoughtful person. In this respect, it must be noted that, when *A Tale of a Tub* and *The History of John Bull* were published, only the few were educated, while the many were illiterate. But those who could not read met in groups, so Horace

Walpole has told us, to have the tracts and journals, such as John Wilkes' *North Briton*, read to them. And now, after nearly one hundred years of general education, I have my doubts if there be one in ten thousand who would know, if he read Swift's satires, what the author was driving at. I have tested many young graduates upon matters of this order, but I cannot remember one who had even looked into the books of the man who has been recognized as "the greatest satirist in the English language."

It was in this period that political lying became an art that was practiced by nearly all governments. About the same time in France, Voltaire told his people that diplomacy was "the field of lies." But there is nothing in the literature of the English that compares with Swift's treatise upon the subject, entitled "The Art of Political Lying." Here are one or two passages that are samples of his wit. He is propounding "the celerity and duration of lies."

. . . . As to the celerity of their motion, the author says it is almost incredible: he gives several instances of lies, that have gone faster than a man can ride post: your terrifying lies travel at a prodigious rate, above ten miles an hour: your whispers move in a narrow vortex, but very swiftly. The author says, it is impossible to explain several phenomena in relation to the celerity of lies, without the supposition of synchronism and combination.¹

Then he comes to ponder a very difficult question: "whether a lie is best contradicted by truth, or by another lie."

. . . . For example; if it should be reported that the Pretender was at London, one would not contradict it by saying, he never was in England; but you must prove by eye-witnesses, that he came no farther than Greenwich, and then went back again. Thus if it be spread about, that a great person were dying of some disease, you must not say the truth, that they are in health, and never had such a disease, but that they are slowly recovering of it. So there was not long ago a gentleman, who affirmed, that the treaty with France, for bringing popery and slavery into England, was signed the 15th of September; to which another answered very judiciously, not, by opposing truth to his lie, that there was no such treaty; but that, to his certain knowledge, there were many things in that treaty not yet adjusted.²

I know the usual response to my reviving Swift's satires will be, "What's the use of that old stuff?" When I reach the field of lies, in which statesmen and diplomatists trod so carelessly for at least twenty years before the First World War, the wide awake student will readily understand the reason for it.

¹ *Works*, 2nd ed., Edinburgh, 1824, Vol. VI, p. 190.

² *Ibid.*, p. 191.

Historical Background of the Entente

THE EMBRYO, which through many vicissitudes developed and brought to birth the preliminaries of the negotiations for an entente with France, may now be traced back to 1897, when Théophile Delcassé dispatched the Liotard mission to the Upper Ubangi. As a result of this ill-conceived expedition, Captain Marchand occupied Fashoda, and soon the diplomatic atmosphere was charged with rumors of war. To the modern specialist in history this may appear as "old stuff," but it is a fact that cannot be ignored and must be carefully studied if the work of the Prince of Wales at that time is to be understood.

The state of the world in the years just before and after the death of Victoria might have been likened to the conditions in a lunatic asylum when the superintendent and the staff have taken a holiday. There were few spots upon the map that were not in a state of trouble. China, Japan, the South Seas, North and South Africa, Egypt, and every power on the continent of Europe were in a turmoil, and the dreams of their rulers and diplomatists were more often nightmares than lullabies. The feverish unrest, as often as not, was instigated by a scot-free press, free to traduce, libel, invent yarns and keep the cauldron of hate at the boiling point.

How any amateur diplomat was able to see clearly through the fogs of misunderstanding, no one has attempted to explain. As Prince and King, Edward was in no better position to know what was going on than a postmaster in a country town. It is true there are records of his consultations with ministers, but in reading the dispatches in the volumes of diplomatic correspondence, it is obvious that even the chief ministers did not always know what action to take. But these volumes of exchanges that pass between the chancelleries and foreign offices are of value to the historian only when they are studied side by side with the correspondence of rival powers. We have already mentioned one example of this extraordinary hiatus. *Bismarck's Relations With England 1871-1890*³ came as a revelation not only to the permanent officials of the Foreign Office, but also to those historians who thought they knew for certain the country that was guilty of starting the First World War.

Whether the negotiations for the making of the Entente sprang from the mind of King Edward, or of William Lavino, *The Times* correspondent in Paris, or even of Delcassé has not been established. Lavino was congratulated on his share in bringing it about by no less a person than Valentine Chirol. They plodded a very rough course before agreement

³ In *German Diplomatic Documents 1871-1914*, selected and trans. by E. T. S. Dugdale, 4 vols., New York and London, Harper, 1928.

was reached. However, quite a different story is told about it in *The History of The Times*.⁴ I think it is almost impossible for a historian of any type—realistic or romantic—to form an acceptable judgment of the action of the powers during the years 1897 to 1904, unless Chapters XII and XIII of this work are read, studied, and digested, with a view to learning why France was chosen for an ally by Great Britain. There is no lode in any mine of diplomatic information richer in content than this astounding exposure of inept shortsightedness and prejudicial arrogance on the part of monarchs and statesmen and journalists. On every other page one finds sentence after sentence tinged with a venom of suspicion, envy and fear. It is a startling tome for anyone to study, and I know of no other work that exposes to view the sinister methods of journalists and shows how their fulminations contributed to the destruction of Europe. This Volume III should be placed prominently in the library of every college and university in the world.

Those who have read the fulsome accounts of the part played by Edward, as Prince of Wales and as King, in the molding of the Entente will be surprised to find in *The Times* account that he is not credited as the sole originator of it. Yet, his friends in *Haute Finance*, so we learn from *The Times*, were not merely silent partners in this business. We know that he had surrounded himself with a strange variety of acquaintances. Virginia Cowles, in her book, *Edward VII and His Circle*⁵ mentions some of them. She has had the courage to publish a print of Max Beerbohm's cartoon of these personages. Several of them were closely allied to continental organizations of concessionaires. Indeed, on the directorate of the Comité du Maroc and the Union des Mines will be found the names of men of high finance. The gossips in England and in France spoke quite openly of the Prince's association with these people, and said that he was heavily in debt to them. Perhaps they imagined he was as much interested in colonial affairs as the King of the Belgians was in the Congo. Whether or not there was any truth in these reports, I do not remember a case when one merited an official refutation.

The British jingoes were aflame with indignation when they learned about the occupation of Fashoda. After all the work attempted by Generals Gordon and Kitchener along the valley of the Nile, in crushing the revolt of the Mahdi, it was not to be tolerated that France should now grasp the prizes upon which the British government had put its seal.

⁴ *Loc. cit.*, Vol. III, *The Twentieth Century, 1884-1912*, London, The Times, 1947.

⁵ London, Hamish Hamilton, 1956; American edition, *Gay Monarch*, New York, Harper, 1956.

This was the year of the Diamond Jubilee, when all nations were called to Britain to celebrate the crowning year of Victoria's reign. It was also the time when the United States government departed from its policy of splendid isolation and poked its nose into the affairs of Europe. At the urging of Mark Hanna, President McKinley sent John Hay to London:

. . . . An understanding was reached that in case of war begun by Germany or Austria for the purpose of executing Pan-Germanism, the United States would promptly declare in favor of England and France and would do her utmost to assist them. . . .⁶

We are now reaping the whirlwind, and what we thought were seeds that would bear fruit worth eating are nothing but tares.

Eighteen Ninety-seven was also the year in which a great leap forward was made in the construction of war vessels.

Continuity in the Structure of History

WHEN A SICK MAN presents himself to a physician for examination, he seldom knows what is the cause of his pains and aches. Sometimes he thinks the doctor rather callous in not devoting more time to the present ills than to other causes. Yet, the medical man goes on with the diagnosis, and then tries to learn the history of the case by asking the patient about his parents' health. There have been patients who wondered what on earth that had to do with the present pain, but the doctor is not satisfied with that only. He inquires searchingly into the ailments of the patient's childhood and into his work and habits. All this takes place in the physician's consulting room.

But when it is a matter of the cause of war, of the loss of men and dollars, of the suffering the survivors have to sustain, the wretched taxpayer, scarcely knowing how to make both ends meet, takes little or no heed of the cause and the circumstances of his trouble. And this is perhaps the chief reason why governments make wars with the support of their legislatures and the electorates.

Alice would say, "Curiouser and curiouser."

We need to revert to the historical methods of two or three generations ago. I have tried to impress upon my readers the necessity of delving into the mud, as Lord Acton called it in a letter to Mary Gladstone. There is no doubt about its being mud, and perhaps that is why we find it so hard to plod out of the Slough of Despond our fathers made for us.

I would have students prepare themselves for the tasks they will be

⁶ Roland Usher, *Pan-Germanism*, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1913, p. 139.

called upon to undertake in a generation when men may be saner than they are today, and when a restoration of order is under way. They cannot do better than turn to Acton, and read that perfect lecture on the "Study of History" which he gave when he took the chair at Cambridge in June, 1895. He was so thorough and painstaking in his endeavor to get at the truth that he told the great audience, assembled to welcome him, that in history "the structure is continuous, and we can trace things back uninterruptedly, until we dimly descry the Declaration of Independence in the forests of Germany."⁷

Certainly we have today historians of repute producing works on the Saxons in England, which make as stirring reading as anything to be found in the libraries of scholars.

Therefore, we should be clear as to our meaning when we talk rather lightly of history. Much that goes by its name is so trivial that our youth have no conception of its power to shape the mind. That part of it which is tinged with the preposterous adoration of politicians seeking power and emolument might as well be classed in the category of "light romance for feeble minds." Lord Acton says:

. . . . For a man is justly despised who has one opinion in history and another in politics, one for abroad and another at home, one for opposition and another for office. History compels us to fasten on abiding issues, and rescues us from the temporary and transient. Politics and history are interwoven, but are not commensurate. Ours is a domain that reaches farther than affairs of state, and is not subject to the jurisdiction of governments. It is our function to keep in view and to command the movement of ideas, which are not the effect but cause of public events. . . .⁸

Should the student question the value of the statement quoted above, he has only to read Thomas Fortescue Carter's *A Narrative of the Boer War*⁹ and compare the facts therein stated by *The Times* correspondent in Africa with the account given in *The History of The Times 1884-1912*, Volume III, Chapter VII. If he does this, he will soon discover how utterly unreliable are many of the reports of a paper of such repute as *The Times*. It is farcical, from a historical point of view, to be told by the editor of this *History* that "The type of public man who best expressed the imperial feeling of Printing House Square was Cecil Rhodes." He was the man who dreamed of an empire for Britain and desired to see the map of the world colored red. He was the man who formed the

⁷ *Lectures on Modern History*, London, Macmillan, 1906, p. 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁹ London, John Macqueen; Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg, J. C. Juta & Co., 1896.

Chartered Company of South Africa. The story of the fortunes made by Rhodes, Beit and Rochfort Maguire has been told by Francis Hirst in his book entitled *In the Golden Days*.¹⁰

Hirst was the editor of *The Economist*, and was known all over the financial and commercial world as a man of integrity. A few months before the Jameson Raid, in 1895, the £1 shares of the British South Africa Company bounded up in the market to the preposterous price of £8. The credulous investors among the general public, who had no warning whatever that the directors were off-loading their shares, were left high and dry by the crash. Hirst writes:

. . . [Henry] Labouchere's estimate of Cecil Rhodes' profit was £546,376, of Alfred Beit's £459,520, of Rochfort Maguire's £228,860, of Beit and Rhodes in their joint name £837,946, and so on. The profiteers included several dukes and peers. Rhodes and Beit had "tipped" these Chartered Shares, and the danger of inside tips was never better illustrated. I remember an unfortunate Oxford don, who thought he was making a patriotic fortune, lost most of his hard-earned savings by investing at the height of the boom. . . .¹¹

It should be noticed that Hirst says that among the shareholders were several dukes and peers. He does not mention the Prince of Wales because it was not proved that he was a shareholder. Still, there were rumors that he was much disturbed when the Select Committee began its work at Westminster Hall in February, 1897. Here, let *The Times* speak for itself:

. . . A crowd of eminent representatives of the House of Commons, of the Bar and of Society awaited the entry of Rhodes. He came into the room accompanied by Beit and Phillips. A few minutes later the Prince of Wales arrived, and was soon joined by Lord Selborne and the Duke of Abercorn. . . .

A main object of the inquiry was to assess Rhodes' responsibility for the Raid. It was known that he had not been in England during the previous six months, but it was believed in many quarters that during that time he had been in secret communication with [Joseph Chamberlain] the Colonial Secretary. . . .¹²

It is well to assume that Rumor is a lying jade. But during that investigation there was not a supporter of Rhodes and Jameson who would have faced the task of trying to convince many hard-headed Englishmen that the Prince was not interested in what had been done. However, nothing came of it that was satisfactory to those who knew a gross wrong had

¹⁰ London, Frederick Muller Ltd., 1947.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 185-6.

¹² *History of The Times*, Vol. III, p. 220.

been inflicted upon a peaceful community. Shortly afterwards, *The Times* went to the rescue of the Outlanders in the Transvaal, and the great cry came that thousands of women and children were in danger of losing their lives.

Colonel J. Y. F. Blake, an American soldier, in his sensational book, *A West Pointer with the Boers*,¹³ gives a correct account of how the infamous petition, crying for help, was foisted upon the British public. Of the 21,000 names on it, only 2,000 were accepted as genuine. Blake was at Pretoria and he, with Richard Harding Davis, Peter MacQueen and other American correspondents, learned the signature gatherers were paid twenty-five dollars per hundred names.

There are today many books that give us the facts about this shocking business. For a life of Rhodes, by an admirer, there are Sir Lewis Michell's volumes.¹⁴ But the one work upon which the student may rely for the facts is Michael Davitt's *The Boer Fight for Freedom*.¹⁵

Virginia Cowles, in her book, has passed lightly over this scandalous affair. She does not associate in any way the strange friends of the Prince of Wales she mentions, and who are pictured in Max Beerbohm's cartoon, with the endeavors of Cecil Rhodes.

Keeping the People in Ignorance of Foreign Affairs

THE NEWS GATHERED from the journals by readers in the cities and industrial towns is of secondary importance to most of them, because when they are not laboring long hours, they are busy finding recreation in racing, cricket and football. As for the people in the country, they get their news of parliamentary and foreign affairs from the weekly paper. The snippets of information take up so little space that I have often wondered whether they were worth while printing. I lived in the heart of an agricultural district for years and used to glance down the columns of the provincial journal. The information was of purely local interest, with the exception of a serial story.

How, then, can you expect a considered opinion on these great events from a people left in ignorance of what is really taking place? But it is not only a matter that concerns the general run of individuals; it extends far above them, for I have known members of the House of Commons who lacked reliable information about important affairs as seriously as their constituents. To give an instance: when those of us who were

¹³ Boston, Angel Guardian Press, 1903.

¹⁴ *The Life and Times of Rhodes, 1853-1902*, New York and London, Mitchell Kennerley, 1910, 2 vols.

¹⁵ New York and London, Funk & Wagnalls, 1902.

opposed to Sir Edward Grey's policy desired to form a committee of Liberal members to force a debate on foreign affairs, we found only twelve per cent of our colleagues willing to help us.

The same condition prevailed in the days of George III. Everything, then, was done by the higher powers to keep the people in ignorance. Consider the pronouncement of that great jurist, Lord Erskine, who became Lord Chancellor of England and the defender of Tom Paine. He said:

. . . The great mass of British subjects have no surer means of being informed of what passes in parliament and in the courts of justice, or of the general transactions of the world, than through cheap publications within their means of purchase; and I desire to express my dissent from that principle and opinion, that the safety of the state, and the happiness of the multitude in the laborious condition of life, may be *best secured by their being kept in ignorance of political controversies and opinions*. I hold, on the contrary, that the government of this country can only continue to be secure while it conducts itself with fidelity and justice, and as all its acts shall, as heretofore, be thoroughly known and understood by all classes of the people.¹⁶

That was an opinion expressed over one hundred years ago. After more than two generations of public schools, Sir Edward Grey had the temerity to say in answer to the question put by a Member of Parliament: "It is not in the public interest to give the information."

It is hard plodding for the research student who is seeking facts, to attempt to reach a zone in which he will find enlightenment. So much has been impressed with the taboo of official edict that only a man who lived through the decade 1895 to 1905 can hope to reach some semblance of reliable information about the intrigues which complicated the foreign policy of the powers. How press reports, debates in legislatures, and replies by cabinet ministers differed from the knowledge of those "*in the know*," is one of the most startling surprises of the period. Where the Prince of Wales stood on foreign policy at this time has never been decided, to my knowledge. But I do know what took place at Sandringham when Kaiser Wilhelm II visited England in 1899.

The Prime Minister was indisposed, and Chamberlain was "in the saddle." A meeting of extraordinary importance was arranged by the Prince of Wales, to which the Kaiser, Joseph Chamberlain and Count Bernhard von Bülow, then German foreign secretary, were invited. The prime subject discussed at this meeting was the announcement in Cham-

¹⁶ Lady Anne Hamilton, *Secret History of the Court of England*, London, William Henry Stevenson, 1832, 2 vols., Vol. II, pp. 199-200.

berlain's speech at Leicester when he declared: "No far-seeing statesman could be content with England's permanent isolation on the Continent of Europe. . . . The natural alliance is between ourselves and the great German Empire."

He had no cabinet authority for making this proposal. Indeed, Salisbury had convinced himself it could not be attained, no matter how wise and practical it seemed to him and other leaders of opinion in England and Germany. We have in the Documents¹⁷ Lord Salisbury's letter to Bismarck and what appears to be a full account of the diplomatic interchanges passed by the two powers. Chamberlain's idea was an old one. It did not originate with him. During the decade before the Sandringham meeting, referred to above, Bismarck and Salisbury were in communication directly upon the question, and in January, 1889 in a speech to the Reichstag, the German Chancellor said:

. . . I think of England as the old traditional Ally, whose interests do not clash with ours. — I use the word "Ally" not in its diplomatic sense; for we have no treaties with England; — but I desire to cling to the friendship that we have enjoyed for at least five hundred years with England, even in Colonial questions. If I were warned that we are losing it, I should take precautions to avoid doing so.¹⁸

This, and many other similar friendly statements found in the correspondence, should prove conclusively that those who wrote of German hatred of England and of Bismarck's insincerity were misinformed (to use no stronger expression), and some of them knew they were.

The Prince of Wales, interfering at intervals, did not know what position to take in this matter. His heart was for France and his mind for Germany. But when he fell into Chamberlain's hands he soon realized the power of the *master strategist* and, in this case, became his tool. It came to nothing, for the bad news from South Africa soon gave Joseph Chamberlain something else to think about. Like most of the hares he had let loose since he took cabinet rank (under Gladstone), it went to earth and there it remained.

Dr. W. H. Edwards (*The Tragedy of Edward VII, A Psychological Study*), like so many others, wrote too soon. His work bears the date July 1928. The *Documents* were published in September 1928. I could name a dozen well-known biographers and publicists—such as J. A. Spender, A. G. Gardiner and other "bare-faced apologists"—who could not wait until morn broke to lighten the darkness.

¹⁷ *Bismarck's Relations With England*, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

The Feud Between Edward VII and the Kaiser

THE HIGHLY COLORED PORTRAITS of Edward VII, as Prince and King, that we find in *The Tragedy of Edward VII*, were in need of some cleaning and revarnishing before Admiral Sir John Fisher confided to the King his desire to "Copenhagen the German fleet." The book, *Memories*, written by Admiral Fisher, the First Sea Lord¹⁹ throws a searchlight upon His Majesty and his political achievements, which reveals a buccaneering spirit that is quite different from the peacemaking virtue Edwards attributes to his subject.

The frictions that arose from time to time between Great Britain and Germany go far deeper than many of the recorders imagine. Of course, the press was responsible for prodding the demons of hate, and Edwards gives us several instances of the complaints made by the two governments as to the rancor fomented by harebrained journalists. Yet, there was something else, and it was put to me after the First World War by one of the best-informed Europeans I ever met. He was Noel Buxton.

Ramsay MacDonald, who became Prime Minister in January 1924, asked me to dine with him in the House of Commons to renew my friendship with Buxton, who had read my book, *How Diplomats Make War*,²⁰ and wished to discuss with me the position of Germany. They knew I had recently spent several months in Central Europe and had been in touch with many of the leaders of thought in Paris, Berlin and Vienna. It was one of the most interesting evenings I ever spent with politicians. Buxton asked me how the family and social dislike between uncle and nephew, and nephew and uncle, arose. I was mightily surprised at his question, but he explained to me that he had heard from his brother Charles about my life at the opera and the people I met, and he thought I might have heard "tittle-tattle and gossip," such as were common at that time about the families of Windsor and Potsdam.

Strangely enough, I had thought of writing my recollections of what I had gathered from people "in the know" about the quarrels. But I had put it off, hoping vainly to do it at some other time. Now, after more than thirty years, I must admit my recollections are a bit hazy. However, I do remember hearing about the delegation, headed by the Duchess of Leeds, which called upon the Archbishop of Canterbury in connection with the private life of the Prince, and the shocking scandals of wild behavior which were mentioned from time to time in the press. There was no secret about any of these stories. On off-nights, when I was not busy on

¹⁹ London, New York, Toronto, Hodder and Stoughton, 1919.

²⁰ New York, B. W. Huebsch, 1915.

the stage at the Opera, friends would gather in my room in the interval before the last act, and talk quite freely about the courtesans of the Prince and his friends.

The work accomplished by Noel Buxton and his brother Charles has been incorporated in that astonishing book by T. P. Conwell-Evans, *Foreign Policy from a Back Bench, 1904-1918*.²¹ In this the reader will find accurate evidence to support my assertion that he was the best-informed English-European of that time. The commissions he undertook for the government in the Balkans, in Germany and elsewhere, stamp him as a man of authority in foreign affairs and a diplomatist of peace *par excellence*. Intellectually and culturally Noel Buxton was the superior of any man that sat on the Front Bench, but there was nothing sensational about him. He was not a headliner; he never made a bellicose speech; he was never guilty of talking down to the lowest intelligence. Consequently, he has been overlooked by the romanticists who have given us the popular yarns about the causes of wars.

The scandals of the era are treated at some length in Virginia Cowles' book. And, still, there was something deeper. I told MacDonald and Buxton that, when I was in Berlin in 1897, I gathered that some of my German and English friends there were under the impression that most of the quarrels between the Prince of Wales and the Kaiser arose from jealousy. Sir Frank Lascelles was then British Ambassador to Berlin, and he is the man I have always thought could really give us the facts about the inner history of this petty affair.

The Kaiser had been a monarch for twelve years before Queen Victoria died, and Germany had made such successful strides in shipping and commerce that she became the envy of Great Britain. British trade then was suffering severely from the competition of both America and Germany in the markets of the world. I was told that the advance made by the Central Empire was so surprising that it would have turned the head of a man of sturdier caliber than the Emperor. Moreover, he was the most powerful monarch in Europe, and held far more influence in the courts of the Continent than the Prince of Wales could possibly have had, because the British ministers were usually opposed to his interference in foreign affairs. My informants thought that the Prince of Wales smarted under this handicap.

Commentators may heap upon the head of the Emperor all the stupidities of which he was guilty, all the blustering and saber-rattling, and yet

²¹ London, Oxford University Press, 1932.

overlook the fact that life at Potsdam was totally different in conduct than that at Marlborough House. Certainly the Kaiser was never known to associate with the kind of people who gathered round the Prince. I do not remember his name being connected with a single court or social scandal.

I knew people who had met the Kaiser, who were beholden to him for many kindnesses. He received Harry Waller and sanctioned the performance of one of his operas. Through the influence of the Ambassador, Sir Frank Lascelles, Ethel Smyth met him, played some of the score of her opera, *Der Wald*, to him, a work which had its first performance under the aegis of the Kaiser at Berlin. In music, in literature, in archaeology, and other of the cultural arts, learned men, scientists and artists, found in him a patron who was no mere amateur in knowledge of their work. But none of that appears in the books of the recorders, who have presented to us a monarch whose mistakes in politics brought nations to the verge of war several times.

Edward VII's Ignorance of Britain's Secret Commitments

VIRGINIA COWLES tells us: "The Prince had a horror of highbrows. Some of his friends, like Lord Rosebery, were clever men, but the latter was sophisticated enough to avoid all mention of literature in favor of talk about politics or racing."

Her reference to "The Souls," a coterie of highly cultured men and women, is brief. It deserved, as a contrast, a much fuller description than she gives to the people who composed it. The reason for this mere passing reference to an exceedingly interesting group of people is that she is bent upon giving as much space as possible to her subject's caprices. She says:

These activities did not impress the Prince, and he had the satisfaction of knowing that no matter how highbrow the Souls considered themselves, not one would fail to jump at an invitation to Marlborough House. He set the fashions more firmly than ever. Not only his food, his clothes, and his mannerisms were copied, but his idiosyncrasies as well. Because he was superstitious the smart world took infinite pains to see that mattresses were not turned on Fridays, that knives were not crossed on the table, and, of course, that no one sat down thirteen to dinner.²²

Apart from ministers of the crown and his financial and sporting friends, one searches in vain the index columns of such books as *Edward VII and His Circle* for the names of notable scientists, archaeologists or other eminent persons who were included in the Prince of Wales' circle. The

²² *Op. cit.*, pp. 214-5.

Lubbocks, the Tennysons, the Hardys, the Listers, and other distinguished men of the time are missing.

There was, however, one personage who knew court life better than anyone who has left memoirs covering the last twenty or thirty years of Victoria's life. That was Lady Ponsonby, the wife of General Sir Henry Ponsonby, private secretary to the Queen. For years she set the standard of behavior in English society outside the Prince of Wales' circle. For a long time she was in attendance upon Her Majesty, and she knew the reason for the cleavage between Marlborough House and Buckingham Palace "even better than her husband knew it." Her son Arthur was a very dear friend of mine, a colleague in the House of Commons, and one of a group of members who decided, when the War of 1914 was declared by Asquith, to gather information about its cause. The members who responded to a call to meet that day in a private committee room of the House of Commons formed the nucleus of the Union of Democratic Control. Should the reader desire an example of firsthand information about the formation of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's cabinet, I would advise him to read Francis Hirst's book, *In the Golden Days*. There he will find the views of Arthur Ponsonby expressed with a candor and freshness unusual in the writings of politicians who have been in close touch with members of the cabinet. Arthur was private secretary to the Prime Minister, and his testimony concerning the secret arrangements for the conversations between the French and English military staffs is accurate. Campbell-Bannerman was not told by Grey or Haldane that these conversations had been in progress for several years. One day I asked Arthur about this question, a burning question during and after the First World War. Had he spoken of it to Vaughan Nash, who was Campbell-Bannerman's political secretary? Arthur replied, "Many times. Nash is certain the Prime Minister was not informed."

After Victoria died, Lady Ponsonby was free to speak of the days of the Marlborough House set. On one occasion she was asked if she had seen Max Beerbohm's cartoon of the Queen in widow's weeds, sitting in high dudgeon with a look of pitiful disdain upon her face, and her son the Prince standing in a corner with his face to the wall and his hands behind his back. She replied, "The pity was she didn't keep him there."

There was no love lost between the Palace at the end of the Mall and Marlborough House.

Why, then, are we to imagine that the Prince, in opposition to the desires of his ministers, considered what the consequence of his acts might be, when he took upon himself to make plans for an entente with France?

One thing existed that neither he nor the government knew about at that time. That was the secret military treaty, made in 1892 between France and Russia, in which it was laid down that mobilization of the two countries was a declaration of war against Germany. This meant that, if a war broke out, Great Britain was committed to obligations of armed force far beyond Germany.

(Continued)

Port Washington, New York

Edward VII and the Entente Cordiale, III

By FRANCIS NEILSON

THE SECOND BOER WAR was a disaster for Great Britain. She might have recovered from its consequences if Campbell-Bannerman had been spared for a few more years. His death in 1908 brought to the fore the imperialists in his cabinet—Asquith, Grey and Haldane—and the strength of the old Liberal-Radical force in the Commons gradually weakened. The large majority gained in the General Election of 1906 dwindled in adverse by-elections until, in 1910, the party was saved by eighty-two Home Rulers and forty Labor members.

The last months of Victoria's long reign were clouded and dreary. The change, in three or four years, from the rejoicings of 1897 was so startling that shrewd parliamentarians, like James Bryce, and historians, like Augustine Birrell and Sir Charles Dilke, scarcely knew what to make of it. The future looked black, for Great Britain had not one friendly power in Europe.

World Threats to British Supremacy

IT WAS THEN she realized, at first reluctantly, that her trade in the markets of the world was threatened by the growth of American and German industries. Both became serious competitors in South America and the Far East. Great Britain had been caught napping. The United States built ocean liners for passengers and cargo, and German dockyards launched ships as good for speed and comfort as any that sailed the Seven Seas. In 1897 the *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse* beat the Atlantic speed record by crossing from New York to Southampton in five days and fifteen hours. The Germans held the speed record for eleven years. This was an achievement that caused consternation among the shipbuilders of Belfast and on the Clyde.

Then another threat was felt—all was not well for the export trade. The McKinley high tariff seemed a strange measure for cementing in bonds of friendship the United States and Great Britain. Joseph Chamberlain, who had a bee in his bonnet for an Anglo-German alliance, tried another dodge. In May 1898, at Birmingham, he declared, "The Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack should wave together over an Anglo-Saxon alliance."

This was a hare started for the purpose of turning attention away from the plans previously made for an easy triumph in South Africa, solely in the interest of the Rhodes-Beit-Barnato group. John Hay said he spoke to Chamberlain about the speech, which was well received in the United

States, and he remarked, "I don't care a hang what they say about it on the Continent."¹

How the Prince of Wales regarded this queer business is not recorded in any of the books I have studied. But we do know his heart was set on an alliance with Germany one year later. It is difficult to keep pace with the shifts of Chamberlain and the effect they had on his pupil. Still, he should have known that Chamberlain had been one time *for* and another *against* every chief political problem since he became a minister of the crown. The list runs to more than a dozen burning issues in domestic and foreign affairs which, at odd times, he was both in favor of and against.

The cross purposes of the United States, Germany and Great Britain for this period are so patent in the records that a reflective reader might ask if their spokesmen knew from one day to another what new shift would cancel out the aim of yesterday. We find America for Britain and against Germany, according to John Hay; France for Russia, against Germany; Great Britain for Germany, against Russia. Yet, Germany was still in favor of an alliance with England. Lowes Dickinson called it *The International Anarchy*—the title of his indispensable book.² It was a bewildering assortment of purposes, which perplexed the coolest heads in the chancelleries the year Victoria went to her rest.

In the spring of 1900 she was in good health, for a woman of her age, and her physician thought she might reach her eighty-fifth year. She was in close touch with the Prime Minister and in her Journal of 1899 she wrote:

. . . Lord Salisbury came to see me. . . . Talking of events in general he said the one cause of anxiety was the Transvaal. This country, as well as the Cabinet, excepting perhaps Mr. Chamberlain, were against a war.³

The next year, by royal command, acts from three different operas were given at Windsor Castle by the musicians and singers of Covent Garden. At a time when British troops in South Africa were being "badly mauled by the Boers," the performances seemed to many to be out of keeping with the conditions then prevailing. Yet, her critics tolerated opera every night in London, attended frequently by the Prince of Wales.

As a rule, some hours before the performance took place I was told by

¹ William R. Thayer, *The Life and Letters of John Hay*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1915, 2 vols., Vol. II, p. 169.

² New York and London, Century Co., 1926.

³ Quoted by Algernon Cecil, *Queen Victoria and Her Prime Ministers*, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1953, p. 329.

the management whether the Prince of Wales would be present, for it meant shortening the waits between the acts when he attended. He was a stickler for punctuality, and Lord de Grey, who was the treasurer of the Princess of Wales' household, said that the Prince's engagements after the opera depended upon the time it would end. Many were the stories he told me of what he called the Prince's "mania" for being on time.

Concessionaires in Morocco

MEANWHILE, THE INTERNATIONAL CONCESSIONAIRES were pushing on in Morocco, and it was not until evidence was given in the libel action of *L'Humanité*, in March 1911, that the public learned the names of the directors of the Union des Mines. In the list we find French, German and British companies banded together as closely as a flock of sheep:

The French "group" included the Cie. des Forges de Chatillon-Commentry et Neuves Maisons, Schneider et Cie. Banque française pour le commerce et l'Industrie, Count Armande, etc.; the German "group" included Krupps, the Metallurgische Gesellschaft of Frankfurt, the Nationalbank für Deutschland of Berlin, etc.; the British "group" included A. E. Harris of Harris Dixon, Ltd., London, Mr. Bonar Law, M.P., Mr. W. B. Harris, correspondent of the *Times* at Tangier, etc.; the Spanish "group" included the Marquis de Villamejor, and so on.⁴

The absorption of the natural resources of Algeria and Morocco had been going on gradually for years before Delcassé became Foreign Minister in Paris. He was an imperialist who had no false notions of Christianizing and educating backward peoples. Indeed, he was an out-and-out realist and knew the value of exploiting the minerals of northern Africa where labor would be inexpensive. To do the man justice, he sought no gain for himself in any of this work. So far as I know, his hands were clean when he resigned his office.

The most concise review of affairs in northwest Africa is to be found in *Morocco in Diplomacy* by E. D. Morel.⁵ How closely associated the Prince of Wales was with the great directorates of the concessionaires nobody knows, but no wonder many in France were skeptical about this, for his action as a royal Foreign Minister seemed always to coincide with the aim and purpose of the Comité du Maroc and the Union des Mines.

While Great Britain was smarting under the affliction of the war in South Africa, the work of "peaceful penetration" was going on apace in Morocco. Both Great Britain and Germany maintained that their interests in Morocco were commercial only and, although English and German indi-

⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, May 8, 1911.

⁵ London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1912.

viduals were represented upon the directorates of the great concessionaire companies, they were in no way acting in the interests of their governments.

As early as July 1890, the Wilhelmstrasse-inspired *North German Gazette* stated:

Our relations with England form one of the most important guarantees for the maintenance of European peace, and our Government cannot support colonial enterprises which, with no benefit to Germany, are directed against the interests of England.⁶

It is clear from the documents of the three great western powers of Europe that Germany was a rather indolent spectator of events taking place in Egypt and Morocco. There were interchanges from time to time, but no definite negotiations concerning trade and commerce. Then, after Fashoda, the wind changed and forced Great Britain and France to come to an understanding about Egypt. It turned out to be huckstering at a low level. While France was to leave England to play a lone hand in Egypt, England was to permit France (and Spain, as it turned out) to colonize and partition Morocco, in spite of the declarations to the Sultan that they would honor and respect the integrity of his State.

An article in the *Fortnightly Review*, signed by "Diplomaticus," accused the German Government of having a fixed idea of acquiring a part of Morocco. But upon investigation, Morel wrote:

. . . . Not one iota of proof from any quarter has been adduced that the rulers of Germany ever formulated or endorsed the wider aims of the German colonials: ever sought or laboured for the acquisition of coaling stations or for a share in a dismembered Morocco.⁷

Indeed, the German Ambassador in Paris, in June 1901, notified Delcassé that Germany stood for an independent Morocco and complete commercial equality within it. There was no doubt whatever that Germany had made great inroads by her commerce, and this was not at all to the liking of the French Government while Delcassé was Foreign Minister.

One of the reasons why so little is known about the frictions that arose after the Diamond Jubilee is that none of the ministers of the powers was in a position to negotiate with any one in Europe without causing suspicion and envy on the part of the others. The student has only to read such a work as Dr. G. P. Gooch's *History of Modern Europe*,⁸ in which he will find a chapter on Holstein, which reveals this very condi-

⁶ Quoted by Morel, *op. cit.*, p. 18n.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁸ New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1922.

tion I am referring to. Even Dr. Gooch himself, whether consciously or unconsciously, describes a situation that leaves him in a quandary. The trouble in such affairs is that our patriotic historians (those who were called "the adulationists") thought it better to find a scapegoat than to place diplomatic blunders on the shoulders of their friends, who detested sojourns in political wildernesses. With no desire to find excuses for Holstein's stupidities, there is this to be said about the situation as he saw it: his country was flanked east and west by Russia and France, and if there was a war, she knew she would have to fight on two fronts.

Gooch overlooks the fact that, at the period he is dealing with, the provisions of the secret treaty of 1892 between France and Russia were known to the German military staff. "Mobilization is a declaration of war," General de Boisdeffre told the Czar. It is all very well for our British friends to put their telescopes up to their blind eyes, *a la* Nelson, and say Germany had nothing to fear.

Some six or seven years later, after a naval panic in England, Lloyd George made a speech at the Queen's Hall on July 28, 1908. To the dismay of the jingo imperialists in his own party, he described the situation of Central Europe in the clearest terms:

Look at the position of Germany. Her army is to her what our navy is to us—her sole defense against invasion. She has not got a two-Power standard. She may have a stronger army than France, than Russia, than Italy, than Austria, but she is between two great Powers who, in combination, could pour in a vastly greater number of troops than she has. Don't forget that when you wonder why Germany is frightened at alliances and understandings and some sort of mysterious workings which appear in the press, and hints in the "Times" and "Daily Mail." . . . Here is Germany, in the middle of Europe, with France and Russia on each side, and with a combination of their armies greater than hers. Suppose we had here a possible combination which would lay us open to invasion—suppose Germany and France, or Germany and Russia, or Germany and Austria, had fleets which, in combination, would be stronger than ours, would not we be frightened? Would we not arm? Of course we should.

This was the first time the perilous position of Germany in Europe had been put clearly before the British people, and this speech was delivered about the time when Admiral Mahan wrote in *The Scientific American* that "88 per cent of England's guns were pointed at Germany."

We have no record for the years 1900–01 of what action was taken by the Prince of Wales in diplomatic affairs. There is no doubt that he was ailing, and I was told that he sometimes slept during the opera. His box was near the stage, and I could see him distinctly from a peep hole in the

prompt entrance. Whether the cares of the South African War lay heavily upon him or not, no one could deny that he was aging perceptibly. He was about sixty, and perhaps the gay life he had led was slowly telling its tale. His mother passed away in January, 1901. She had reigned sixty-four years.

The funeral procession through the streets of London brought millions to line them. The Kaiser came from Berlin, and some of the journalists inferred that he stole the show by riding a white horse. This was regarded as an impertinence, and I doubt if his uncle ever forgave him for what he considered to be a theatrical display.

The war that was supposed to be over when Lord Roberts left South Africa came to an end at last in May 1902. The coronation was set for June 26, 1901, and at Covent Garden we worked night and day on the preparations for the great coronation gala performance for which Elgar set an ode to music. But two days before the event, the British people were thunderstruck by the news that the King was ill and an operation for perityphlitis was urgent. Sir Frederick Treves was the surgeon, and his work was so successful that within a fortnight the King was reported out of danger and he recovered rapidly.

King Edward's Visit to Paris

IN DR. EDWARDS' anti-German book, *The Tragedy of Edward VII*,⁹ the reader will find information about the activities of the royal diplomatist that many of the English recorders have overlooked or ignored. It is wrong to assume, as some of them do, that the negotiations which led to the Entente were dropped during the King's illness and his convalescence. It is true the government did not play a hand in the game, but Paul Cambon was French Ambassador to London, and, in the ordinary routine of his duty, he would come in contact with the permanent officials of the Foreign Office. Oddly enough, Cambon did not see eye to eye with Delcassé, particularly about the latter's treatment of Germany's desire to clear up the difficulties concerning Morocco. Indeed, he thought it was a mistaken policy for Delcassé to give the cold shoulder to the overtures that came from Berlin and the German Ambassador in Paris.

Already the consequences of the Liotard Mission and the occupation of Fashoda were having their effect upon the minds of many French politicians, with this result, that their Foreign Minister was severely criticized by some, and his influence was gradually weakening. There is a passage

⁹ Trans. from the German, London, Victor Gollancz, 1928.

in Edwards' book which is illuminating, but is not referred to in any of the English works that I have read. He says:

While Delcassé's position in internal politics was gradually weakening, King Edward was preparing for a Mediterranean voyage in order to introduce himself at the Courts of Lisbon and Rome, and to inspect Malta and Gibraltar. He proposed to his Ministers that he should make the return journey to England from the Riviera overland viâ Paris and, for the first time after many years, pay a visit to that city—this time as King. But Lansdowne scouted the idea and the other Ministers also looked askance at the suggestion. They feared an unfriendly reception and a public demonstration which might damage English prestige all over the world. But the King overcame the opposition of his advisers by pointing out that he could not compromise England's prestige. As England was already sufficiently hated in France, he could only jeopardize his own. In the end Lansdowne attempted to limit the programme as much as he possibly could, and during his conversations with Cambon he merely referred to the possibilities of an "unofficial" visit. . . .¹⁰

The King reached Paris May 1, and was received by President Loubet and the entire cabinet. He was dressed in the uniform of a Field Marshal and, at the side of the French President, drove through the streets of Paris. The people received him with hostile cries. They shouted "Vive les Boers! Vive Marchant! Vive Fashoda!" The King took it all in good part. When they reached the Elysée Palace, one of his entourage said to him, "The Frénch don't like us." In reply, the King smiled and asked, "Why should they?"

There were banquets, a great military display at Vincennes, a gala performance at the Théâtre Française, and other festivities. He visited Longchamps which was considered a stronghold of his enemies; and at a gala dinner that night, he spoke warmly of Britain's desire for the friendship of France. To the amazement of everyone, the mob that had jeered at him a few days before assembled and hailed him with cries of "Vive notre roi!" Critics regarded the demonstration as *effervescence*, another emotion of the volatile Parisian.

Such a triumph was magical. It could never have been accomplished through the chancelleries. No minister realized as clearly as he did during the progress of the Boer War that the position of England had weakened, and she had lost the sympathy of powers the world over. Hence, the King's desire to get that war over as quickly as possible, which was not in accordance with the policy of Chamberlain and Milner, who were bent on the annihilation of the Boers. The King realized the danger of England's position with no friends in the world. It was said at that time

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 192-3.

that it was a case of any port in a storm and, as Great Britain's position in and about Egypt was precarious, and France with her collaborator Spain trembled for their interests in Morocco, the King saw the opportunity of doing something to remove the enmities that had been caused by the Fashoda adventure.

Looking at it from a diplomatic standpoint, it may be assumed that it was the thing to do at the time. No one can peer into the future and reckon the consequences of such an act. Had a seer appeared upon the scene like a Daniel for Nebuchadnezzar, he might have said about the agreement: *Mene, mene, tekel upharsin*. That they were taking the first steps to a European conflict never entered their minds.

So that this period of the negotiations with France may be better understood, the reader should bear in mind that they did not spring up and fructify in a month or two. Before the declaration of April 8, 1904, interchanges had been taking place between Paris and London that the governments knew little or nothing about.

There are many books that deal with this "backstairs diplomacy." For a painstaking account based upon the documents of the powers, together with the biographies and memoirs of statesmen, diplomatists, soldiers and sailors, it would be hard to match Hermann Lutz's book, *Lord Grey and the World War*.¹¹ The works of Alfred Fabre-Luce, the French historian, contain searching criticisms of the actions of the powers before World War I began.¹²

The letters that passed between Paul Cambon and Lord Lansdowne as to Britain's consent to support French and Spanish action in Morocco contain a very significant omission: that is the date when the negotiations began. We learn from them of a firm promise to keep their agreement secret. Here are the two letters of October 1904¹³:

M. Cambon to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

DEAR LORD LANSDOWNE,

I am instructed to communicate to you the arrangements which have just been concluded between France and Spain on the subject of Morocco. They were signed on the 3rd inst. by our Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Spanish Ambassador at Paris; they consist of a general Declaration, which will be made public, and of a Convention, which is to be kept secret.

M. Delcassé, in instructing me to forward to you the text of this agreement, in accordance with Article 8 of our Declaration of the 8th April,

¹¹ Trans. by E. W. Dickes, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1928.

¹² See especially *The Limitations of Victory*, New York, Knopf, 1926; *Histoire de la révolution européenne*, Paris, Domat, 1954; and *Journal de l'Europe 1946-1947*, Paris, Cheval Aile, 1947.

¹³ Quoted by Morel, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-3.

1904, pointed out the confidential character of this communication, and instructed me to request you to be good enough to keep the Convention entirely secret.

I have, etc.,
PAUL CAMBON.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to M. Cambon.

DEAR M. CAMBON,

I have had the pleasure of receiving your letter of to-day's date, covering the two documents which you had been instructed to communicate to me in accordance with Article 8 of the "Declaration respecting Egypt and Morocco" of the 8th April last.

I need not say that the confidential character of the "Convention" entered into by the President of the French Republic and the King of Spain in regard to French and Spanish interests in Morocco is fully recognized by us, and will be duly respected. The shorter paper, or "Declaration" made by the two Governments is, I understand, public property.

With best thanks, I am, etc.,
LANSDOWNE.

All this information was learned four months after the Agadir affair. But the amazing thing about it all was that British ministers ignored it and the public took no interest in it. When, however, W. T. Stead published an article in the *Review of Reviews* in the following December, the Radicals in the Liberal party became alarmed. Stead said:

We were nearly involved in the stupendous catastrophe of a gigantic war with the greatest of all the world Powers in order to enable France to tear up the Treaty of Algeciras by taking possession of the Empire of Morocco, whose independence and integrity we were pledged to defend.

We may now look back to what occurred in April 1905, because there has been so much misunderstanding among English historians about the visit King Edward made the following month to Paris. He was supposed to go there *incognito* at the behest of Downing Street, where the Foreign Office officials had heard of the resignation of Delcassé. The French Premier, M. Rouvier, was annoyed at this extraordinary adventure on the part of His Majesty. Here I shall quote from the only reliable account that has been written concerning the outcome of the King's mission. It comes from the pen of Robert Dell, the Paris correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*. But unfortunately he was not in a position to publish the facts until he had retired. I wish it were possible to find space for the whole of this statement, for it is packed with information that will be of value to the historian of the future. Here is an excerpt from it:

. . . He [King Edward VII] had a long interview with the German ambassador, Prince von Radolin, to whom, according to M. Leghait, Belgian Minister at Paris, His Majesty "spoke in very precise terms." King Edward

VII communicated the purport of his conversation with Prince von Radolin to M. Delcassé, to whom he gave an assurance that, in the event of war, England would support France with her fleet, seize the Kiel Canal, and send to the continent an expeditionary force of 100,000 men.

These facts were stated by Jaurès, the French Socialist leader, in the course of a speech at Limoges on October 12, 1905, and in a leading article in *L'Humanité* the following day. He declared that he held them from a "direct and safe French source." That "source" was Rouvier himself, the French Prime Minister. The same information was published in *Le Matin* on October 8. *Le Matin* was inspired by Delcassé. So Rouvier and Delcassé were agreed as to the facts. The *Figaro* confirmed the story on October 14. The Belgian minister in Berlin also confirms it in his Dispatch No. 17.

Neither the King nor M. Delcassé thought it necessary to mention this little matter to M. Rouvier.¹⁴

Churchill and the jingo press have been guilty of fostering the nonsense that the German Emperor was responsible for the resignation of Delcassé. Dell, who was on the spot, knew the facts concerning the Foreign Minister's resignation, and he records the following in his statement of what occurred in 1905:

The *Figaro* stated on October 14, 1905, that the German Emperor's letter brought about M. Delcassé's "second and final resignation." This information was given to the *Figaro* by Delcassé. But it was untrue. During the war, M. Augagneur, who was a member of the Rouvier cabinet in 1905, said, in the Chamber, that no letter from the German Emperor or the German Government had been communicated to the French Cabinet on June 6, 1905. That was the truth.¹⁵

Neither King Edward nor the British Cabinet knew the facts concerning this discreditable affair. They were playing with fire and were unaware of the train of powder that Lansdowne and Delcassé had laid at their feet. It was a sheer case of "damn the consequences," as the phrase went, before the first shot was fired in World War I.

It is not unreasonable to conclude that this was part of the give-and-take policy of France getting out of Egypt and Great Britain permitting her and Spain to have a free hand in Morocco. Therefore, it is fairly safe to say the negotiations were in the making a few months after the Fashoda affair.

Who would accuse King Edward of knowing of these transactions that were hidden from Lord Salisbury and, after he resigned, Mr. Arthur Balfour, when he became Prime Minister? It was in this period the seeds of World War I were sown, for through the violation of commercial agree-

¹⁴ "What We Owe to Lord Grey: The Lansdowne Heritage," *Foreign Affairs*, London, 4 (November 1922), pp. 102-4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

ments made with Germany, her interests in Morocco were crippled. Hence, the so-called "German menace."

The "German Menace" Examined

WHO WERE THE PEOPLE that gave birth to and fostered this preposterous notion? In France, Delcassé; in England, Eyre Crowe and Arthur Nicolson. Harold Nicolson, in his exceedingly interesting book upon his father, who afterwards became Lord Carnock, deals with the whole matter without prejudice. Of course, in Germany they had a whipping post in Holstein, who was at the Wilhelmstrasse, a suspicious, stubborn, short-sighted man of little or no imagination. He never understood Bismarck's policy of keeping good relations with England, and the fact that the Kaiser kept that man, after the blunders he made, does not redound to his credit.

Then there was Isvolsky representing Russia, who was in possession of information the others did not have. He knew the provisions of the secret treaty of 1892 between France and Russia. Perhaps the only other man who had an inkling of it was Delcassé.

Who were these men? Cabinet ministers, diplomatists, permanent secretaries of foreign offices. During the naval panic of 1908, it was asked from Radical platforms in England if one of them had ever grown wheat, baked a loaf, raised a cow, milked it, made a pat of butter; in fact, when was one known to put his hand to manufacturing an article of use that could be sold over the counter to a housewife? John Morley (later Lord Morley) wrote to Mrs. Carnegie saying he could count but twenty men in the world responsible for the First World War. Think of a paper like *The Times* asking on November 26, 1912: "Who, then, makes war?"

. . . The answer is to be found in the Chancelleries of Europe, among the men who have too long played with human lives as pawns in a game of chess, who have become so enmeshed in formulas and the jargon of diplomacy that they have ceased to be conscious of the poignant realities with which they trifle. . . .

How these people got into their heads the notion that Germany was raising an army and building ships to threaten Great Britain is something that has never been explained by them. They merely make assertions. I don't know one that has ever backed them up by quoting the figures for armed and naval forces, based upon the official report to be found in Blue Books and White Papers issued by the governments.

The first time I heard about the "German menace" was when I was fighting my first election in January 1906. It came from no less a person than Lord Esher, Chairman of the Committee of Imperial Defence. I was prepared to meet the statement with figures, for in 1902 when I became

a candidate for a parliamentary constituency, I studied carefully the White Papers issued by the government on the armed forces.

Harold Nicolson, in his book, says his father

believed profoundly in "The German Menace." He believed, that is, that the German army, and above all the German navy, were larger and more fully equipped than was necessary for purposes of mere defence. He believed that there existed a compact minority in Germany (powerful enough to force the hands of the civilians) who desired to use these two mighty engines of war in order to impose the will of Germany upon other nations. And he felt that, since these people believed in force, it was by force alone that they could be restrained.¹⁶

As late as October, 1911, Colonel Repington, the military correspondent of *The Times*, after witnessing the German army maneuvers, wrote:

The writer has not formed a wholly favorable opinion of the German Army, which appears to him to be living on a glorious past and to be unequal to the repute in which it is commonly held. . . . [It] appeared so inferior that it can have no pretensions to measure itself against the French on anything approaching level terms. . . . Failing extreme measures, the best thing to restore new life to the Army would be to disband it for a year in order to give everybody, from top to bottom, a much needed rest.¹⁷

This is no mere babble of an ordinary journalist. Repington was ensconced in the British War Office and was in close touch with the Chiefs of Staff.

According to Repington, the German army was not much of a menace, even to France. We find in Lord Fisher's book, *Memories*,¹⁸ a letter he wrote to King Edward in 1907 about the nonsense that was written in a book by a Mr. Reich about the German navy:

Now this is the truth: England has seven "Dreadnoughts" and three "Dreadnought" Battle Cruisers (which last three ships are, in my opinion, far better than "Dreadnoughts"); total, ten "Dreadnoughts" built and building, while Germany, in March last, had not begun even one "Dreadnought." It is doubtful if, even so late as May last, a German "Dreadnought" had been commenced. It will therefore be seen, from this one fact, what a liar Mr. Reich is.¹⁹

We may be sure that the King was fully informed by Lord Fisher about the strength of the British and German navies and also that Lord Esher gave him facts and figures of the strength of the British and French armies. What becomes, then, of the "German menace"? And we may ask, what

¹⁶ Nicolson, *Lord Carnock*, London, Constable, 1930, p. 330.

¹⁷ *The Times*, London, Oct. 28, 1911.

¹⁸ London, New York and Toronto, Hodder and Stoughton, 1919.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

was Germany preparing for? The policy of von Tirpitz never varied, and in speaking to the Reichstag in 1909, he said:

We should be in a position to blockade the Russian fleet in the Baltic ports, and to prevent at the same time the entrance to that sea of a French fleet. We must also protect our ports in the North Sea from blockade.²⁰

The most extraordinary thing about all this "hullabaloo," as it was called, of the "German menace" is that no British cabinet minister and no diplomatist issued a warning to Russia and France about the growth of their armies and navies. No one told them to stop building ships. Indeed, it seemed as if no one had a right to prepare for war but the Triple Entente. All they did in that way was to save Europe and the world from German domination, so they thought. But it cannot be gainsaid that the first cause of the liquidation of the British, French, and Russian empires found its germ after Fashoda and became a *casus belli* at Algeciras.

The Conference of Algeciras, 1906

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY NARRATIVES set down by writers who have read the government and newspaper reports of what took place at Algeciras, but I do not remember having seen one that came from the pen of a journalist who was present at that extraordinary conference. Now, fifty years after the deliberations that brought forth the Act of 123 articles, we have an account from one of the most brilliant French publicists of the period. He was the diplomatic editor of *L'Echo de Paris*, which at that time had a circulation of 400,000 copies. M. André Mevil must have been one of the very few at that gathering who had a sense of humor. His recollections are published in the April 1956 number of *Ecrits de Paris*, under the title of "Souvenirs anecdotiques sur la conférence d'Algésiras."²¹ I have no doubt about the satirical smile that must have appeared on his face when he read the solemn declaration with which the Act is introduced: "In the name of God Almighty!"

He reminds us that the conference was the first great international gathering of the Powers since the Congress of Berlin. One of his friends, in writing of it, said it was a reunion in "*expiation des péchés de l'Europe*." But Mevil tells us, "Today, it would be necessary to say 'in expiation of the sins of the world.'"

To this great gathering, which concerned a country we knew little or nothing about, the United States sent two representatives who signed the document with certain reservations. They were Henry White, our Ambas-

²⁰ Quoted in my political study, *The Churchill Legend*, Appleton, Wis., 1954, p. 113.

²¹ *Loc. cit.*, pp. 29-33.

sador to Italy, and a State Department representative, Samuel R. Gummeré. Mevil remarks that neither White nor Gummeré knew the history of the cause that had brought the representative of the powers together at an extreme point of Spain to decide the affairs of the State of Morocco.

His description of how the journalists amused themselves during the three months spent at Algeciras, is most entertaining. From his account, it must have been a jovial holiday for them, for parties were going on, poker games, and trips here and there to Gibraltar, where other entertainment was found.

I thought I knew something of the proceedings from friends who were associated with some of the journalists representing English newspapers. But Mevil in his article provides us with the astonishing statement that King Edward VII was the grand manager of the conference. He had a personal representative on the spot in no less a person than Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, a former foreign editor of *The Times*. It seems that Wallace wrote every day to the King, setting down even the least of the events which took place at the conference. And we learn the King was determined that the wishes of Germany should be broken at any cost. A complete mobilization of the English fleet was ordered, and one morning it appeared in battle formation off Algeciras, on its way to anchor off Gibraltar.

How they did enjoy themselves—all those who were opposed to the desires of the representatives of Germany. The French journalists were invited to a great reception given in their honor on board the battleship *King Edward*, which is here designated as the first dreadnought that had been put into service. The Admiral received the guests with hearty warmth; a sumptuous buffet was spread for them, and champagne flowed. The officers on the ship did not hide their impatience to fight it out with the Germans.

It is sad to think now of the great celebrations that welcomed the signing of the Act of Algeciras, which gave the statesmen of great Britain and France an idea that they had so humiliated Germany that she would never trouble them again. Had there been one seer at Algeciras, who could have looked into the future and dared prophesy what the state of the world would be in this year of grace, he would have been spat upon. The three Allies, banded together—Russia, France, and Great Britain—were sure that Germany was encircled, and the diplomatic setback she had suffered would undermine her prestige in the chancelleries of Europe.

We have had the memoirs of Holstein, and we know the man and his characteristics. He was regarded by the Allies as a sinister, double-dealing bureaucrat. But for Holstein, Great Britain had Eyre Crowe and William

Tyrrell. There were people in England, after the First World War, who had some justification in considering that Eyre Crowe did far more damage by his anti-Germanism than ever Holstein did by his methods.

But to return to Algeciras: Sir Sidney Lee, in his *Life of King Edward VII*, tells us that the King told Paul Cambon before the conference, "Tell us what you wish on each point and we will support you without restriction or reserve." As an introduction to the deliberations of the delegates of the powers of Algeciras, it meant a poor lookout for Germany. We learn, also, that Sir Edward Grey wrote privately to Nicolson as early as December, 1905, that he had discovered that Germany would refuse to agree to France's "special position in Morocco which we have promised France not only to concede to her but help her by diplomatic methods to obtain." This letter indicates quite clearly that Grey knew at that time of Great Britain's pledges to France; pledges he hid from the House of Commons for eight years. The letter continues:

. . . . If she can succeed in getting this with our help it will be a great success for the Anglo-French Entente. If she fails the prestige of the Entente will suffer and its vitality will be diminished. *Our main object therefore must be to help France to carry her point at the Conference.*²²

All this is told in Harold Nicolson's book upon his father, *Lord Carnock*. In summing up the proceedings of the Algeciras Conference, he says: "All this was very bad for Europe," and, in closing this chapter, he remarks:

Mr. White, on his return to Rome, expressed to his German colleague the view that "The victor at the Conference is England." The Emperor minuted the despatch which reported this conversation with the single word, "Correct!"

This undesired triumph was very bad for England.²³

So far as Great Britain was concerned, there was not the slightest menace to her real interest in the growth of the German army and navy. The more deadly threat was one whose gravity was understood by some of her leading statesmen and not a few of her great industrialists. That menace was the rapid growth of Germany's merchant marine and the fierce, competitive methods in winning some of the prizes of the export trade. Arthur Balfour put it straight to Henry White when he said: "We are probably fools not to find a reason for declaring war on Germany before she builds too many ships and takes away our trade."²⁴

I suggest there was no doubt in the minds of France's Foreign Minister and his associates about the so-called "German menace." According to

²² Nicolson, *op. cit.*, p. 175 (italics mine).

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

²⁴ Henry White, *Thirty Years of American Diplomacy*, New York, Harper, 1930, p. 257.

Le Gaulois, July 12, 1905, six months before the meeting at Algeciras, Delcassé said:

Of what importance would the young navy of Germany be in the event of war in which England, I tell you, would assuredly be with us against Germany? What would become of Germany's ports or her trade, or her mercantile marine? They would be annihilated. . . . The entente between the two countries and the coalition of their navies, constitutes such a formidable machine of naval war that neither Germany, nor any other Power, would dare to face such an overwhelming force at sea.

The making of the Entente was the unmaking of Europe. Whether the Prince of Wales or William Lavino was its progenitor may be determined by those who read *The History of The Times*.²⁵ My own opinion is that the foreign correspondents of *The Times* contributed no little by their anti-German campaign. Their reports were so filled with animus and distorted views that complaints were made by high personages in England to the editors but without success. Here is a sample of the nonsense that was written by Saunders, *The Times* correspondent, in 1902:

Germany is a *new*, crude, ambitious, radically *unsound* Power. I cannot enter into the unsoundness fully here. The artificial Army system, the pampered commerce and shipping, the Agrarian-industrial cleavage, the unfamiliarity with the perils of civilization—a thousand things, convince me that Germany, with all her phenomenal development, is radically unsound and unhealthy. *We* are still *sound* at the core. We can, if necessary, stand alone.²⁶

And yet this "unsound" State fought the most powerful nations in the world for four years; and after a long period, crippled by the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, she waged war for six years and today, the third resurgence indicates, according to reliable reports, that she is so sound in wind and limb that her manufactures for export have once more become a menace to other competing powers.

King Edward did not live to see the consequences of the Entente Cordiale. He passed away on May 6, 1910, about four years before the War of 1914 broke out. The reader may turn to many reference books to learn what the cost of the two World Wars was in men and money—a terrible price to pay for a whim. And now there is scarcely a spot on the earth that is not in a state of revolt and misery, with the exception of our country. Great Britain and France are third-rate powers, both torn with political and economic dissension and wholly dependent now upon the United States to keep them from actual bankruptcy.

Port Washington, New York

²⁵ *Loc. cit.*, Vol. III, London, *The Times*, 1947.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 366.